

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

علم تفسير القرآن

The science of exegesis of the Holy Quran

Then and now!

# Tafseer

## The Classical Period

# Definition of Tafseer

## تفسير

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا (33) الفرقان  
{ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا } أي: بياناً وتفصيلاً و"التفسير": تفعيل، من الفسر، وهو  
كشف ما قد غطي

التفسير تفعيل من الفسر وهو البيان والكشف

وقال الزركشي: التفسير: علم يفهم به كتاب الله المنزل على نبيه محمد ﷺ وبيان  
معانيه واستخراج أحكامه وحكمه، واستمداد ذلك من علم اللغة  
والنحو والتصريف وعلم البيان وأصول الفقه والقراءات ويحتاج لمعرفة أسباب  
النزول والناسخ والمنسوخ.

وقال بعضهم: التفسير في الاصطلاح علم نزول الآيات وشؤونها وأقاصيصها  
والأسباب النازلة فيها، ثم ترتيب مكيها ومدنيها ومحكمها ومتشابهها وناسخها  
ومنسوخها وخاصها وعامها ومطلقها ومقيدها ومجملها ومفسرها وحلالها  
وحرامها ووعداها ووعداها وأمرها ونهيها وعبرها وأمثالها.

# Definition of Tafseer

To explain, uncover, describe in detail

It is the science that deals with the understanding of the book of Allah revealed to His Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. It involves explanation of its meaning and derivation of commands and wisdom and it requires the knowledge of the linguistics, rhetoric, principles of jurisprudence, sciences of recitation and it needs the knowledge of the reasons for revelation of the verses of the Holy Quran.

# Definition of Ta'weel

## التأويل

هُوَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ  
وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ  
ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ  
فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو  
الْأَلْبَابِ (7)

وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ

وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ

وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا (82)

# Definition of Ta'weel

## التأويل

والتأويل اصله من الأول وهو الرجوع

واختلف في التفسير والتأويل. فقال أبو عبيد وطائفة: هما بمعنى،  
وقد أنكر ذلك قوم حتى بالغ ابن حبيب النيسابوري فقال: قد نبغ في  
زماننا مفسرون لو سئلوا عن الفرق بين التفسير والتأويل ما  
اهتدوا إليه. وقال الراغب: التفسير أعم من التأويل، وأكثر  
استعماله في الألفاظ ومفرداتها، وأكثر استعمال التأويل في المعاني  
والجمل، وأكثر ما يستعمل في الكتب الإلهية، والتفسير يستعمل  
فيها وفي غيرها. وقال غيره: التفسير بيان لفظ لا يحتمل إلا وجهاً  
واحداً، والتأويل توجيه لفظ متوجه إلى معان مختلفة إلى واحد  
منها بما ظهر من الأدلة

# Definition of Ta'weel

To return something to its original (meaning)

Difference of opinion whether tafseer and ta'weel are synonymous.

- synonymous

- tafseer refers to meaning of individual words, while ta'weel refers to the meaning of entire verses.

Tafseer is generic. Ta'weel is specific to the Divine Books

Tafseer deals with words with one specific meaning, while Ta'weel deals with words that have many meanings but it specifies one meaning through evidence and arguments.

# An example

مثاله قوله تعالى إن ربك لبالمرصاد تفسيره: انه من الرصد،  
يقال رصدته: رقبته، والمرصاد مفعال منه. وتأويله التحذير  
من التهاون بأمر الله والغفلة عن الأهبة والاستعداد للعرض  
عليه.



# Why do we need Tafseer?

- Is the Holy Quran not self explanatory?

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

**A triangle:**

**The speaker Allah SWT**

كمال فضيلة المصنف، فإنه لقوته العلمية يجمع المعاني الدقيقة في اللفظ  
الوجيز  
كلام الله  
عربي مبين

**The listeners or the readers with variable intellectual levels**

# Examples

The Companions of the Holy Prophet peace be upon him were the first recipients of the Holy Quran. They knew Arabic very well. They were familiar with the circumstances of the revelation. Yet they would also approach the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, for explanation.

# Examples

(ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم فقالوا: وأينا لم يظلم نفسه، ففسره النبي ﷺ بالشرك، واستدل عليه بقوله (إن الشرك لظلم عظيم وكسؤال عائشة عن الحساب اليسير فقال: ذلك العرض. وكقصة عدي بن حاتم في الخيط الأبيض والأسود

# Importance of Tafseer and its virtues

قال تعالى **يؤتي الحكمة من يشاء ومن يؤت الحكمة فقد أوتي خيراً كثيراً** . وأخرج ابن أبي حاتم وغيره من طريق ابن أبي طلحة عن ابن عباس في قوله تعالى يؤتي الحكمة قال: **المعرفة بالقرآن**، ناسخه ومنسوخه، ومحكمه ومتشابهه، ومقدمه ومؤخره، وحلاله وحرامه، وأمثاله.

وقال تعالى **وتلك الأمثال نضربها للناس وما يعقلها إلا العالمون** . وأخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن عمرو بن مرة قال: ما مررت بآية في كتاب الله لا أعرفها إلا أحزنتني،

# Importance and virtues of Tafseer

وأخرج ابو ذر الهروي في فضائل القرآن من طريق سعيد بن  
جبير عن ابن عباس قال: الذي يقرأ القرآن ولا يحسن تفسيره  
كالأعرابي يهذ الشعر هذا

A person recites the Holy Quran but is not good  
at its explanation is like an A'arabi who simply  
quotes poetry without knowing its meaning.

# Sources of Tafseer

1. The Holy Quran
2. Hadith and Sunna of the Holy Prophe peace be upon Him.
3. Explanations given by the Companion, may Allah be pleased with them
4. Explanations of the follower التابعين
5. Classical Arabic language
6. Intellect. إلا فهماً يؤتاه الرجل في القرآن.

# Tafseer of the Holy Quran from the Holy Quran itself

القرآن يفسر بعضه بعضاً  
Parts of Quran explain others.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (6) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ  
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (7)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ  
النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا  
(69) النساء

# Tafseer of the Holy Quran from the Holy Quran itself

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ  
قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ  
الْخَاسِرِينَ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ  
لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ  
آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى  
حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي  
الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا  
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ



# Tafseer from the Hadith

وقد قال الشافعي رضي الله عنه: كل ما حكم به رسول الله ﷺ فهو مما فهمه من القرآن، قال تعالى **إنا أنزلنا إليك الكتاب بالحق لتحكم بين الناس بما أراك الله**

وقال ﷺ: **ألا إني أوتيت القرآن ومثله معه: عني السنة، لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ**

**وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ**

# Tafseer from Hadith

عَنْ مَعْمَرٍ , عَنْ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ زَيْدٍ بْنِ جُدْعَانَ , عَنْ أَبِي  
نَضْرَةَ , عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ , أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَاهُ فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ  
فَحَدَّثَهُ , فَقَالَ الرَّجُلُ : " حَدِّثُوا عَنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُحَدِّثُوا عَنْ  
غَيْرِهِ , فَقَالَ : إِنَّكَ أَمْرٌ أَحْمَقُ , أَتَجِدُ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ أَنْ صَلَاةَ  
الظَّهْرِ أَرْبَعًا لَا يُجْهَرُ فِيهَا , وَعَدَدَ الصَّلَوَاتِ وَعَدَدَ الزَّكَاةِ  
وَنَحْوَهَا , ثُمَّ قَالَ : أَتَجِدُ هَذَا مُفَسَّرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ , إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ  
" أَحْكَمَ ذَلِكَ وَالسُّنَّةُ تُفَسِّرُ ذَلِكَ

# Tafseer from Hadith

A person asked Imran ibn Haseen, RA, about something and said, “Give me the answer from Allah’s book only and do not quote anything else.”

Imran ibn Haseen, RA said, “You must be foolish. Do you find in Allah’s book that there are four raka in the Dhur prayers and that the recitation in it is done silently? Do you find the number of prayers and the amount to be paid for Zakat and like this. Allah has ordered all of this and the Sunna is the explanation of this.

# Tafseer from Hadith

Serious doubts have been created by the Orientalists, and subsequently by the “modern, reformist, enlightened” Muslims about the authenticity and status of Hadith and Sunnah.

Movements are on the rise about rejecting the role of Hadith in the explanation of the Holy Quran.

This is seen in the works of the Muatazillas, those who call themselves Submitter ([submission.org](http://submission.org))

# Tafseer from Hadith

Some examples of those who deny the validity of Hadith in the explanation of the Holy Quran.

*“Whenever you want to pursue the truth and verify anything you hear about Islam, we urge you to please use the only valid and divine source of Islam, [Quran](#). Submission.org”*

Progressive Muslims

# Tafseer from Hadith

- Muhammad Asad

*Firstly, the Qur'an must not be viewed as a compilation of individual injunctions and exhortations but as one integral whole: that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine in which every verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of them clarifying and amplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped only if we correlate every one of the statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its pages, and try to explain its ideas by means of frequent cross references, always subordinating the particular to the general and the incidental to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully followed, we realise that the Qu'ran is – in the words of Muhammad Abduh – “its own best commentry”*

# Tafseer from Hadith

Why the opposition?

1. Questions about the authenticity of Hadith
2. Questions about the interpretation of Hadith
3. Issues that are beyond human intellect, e.g., physical reality of Heaven and Hell, Angels, Jinn, Shaiytan.
4. Difficult to follow and implement
5. وإن قال الإمام أحمد: ثلاثة ليس لها أصل: التفسير، والملاحم، والمغازي

**There are three things that are not well established, tafseer, the events about the end of the time, and the wars.**

# A clarification of Imam Ahmad's “statement”

- This statement may have been attributed to him by mistake since he has included a large number of ahadith related to tafseer in his Musnad.
- If we consider this statement to be true, then we will have to say that no historical event from the Prophetic life is established.
- Imam Ahmad considered a statement to be a hadith only if it reached him through a well established chain of transmission.



# Tafseer as reported by the Companions may Allah be pleased with them

- Evidence from the practice of the Companions  
may Allah be pleased with them

يجب أن يعلم أن النبي ﷺ بين لأصحابه معاني القرآن كما بين  
لهم ألفاظه، فقوله تعالى **لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم** يتناول هذا  
وهذا. وقد قال أبو عبد الرحمن السلمي: حدثنا الذين كانوا  
يقرءون القرآن كعثمان بن عفان وعبد الله بن مسعود  
وغيرهما أنهم كانوا إذا تعلموا من النبي ﷺ عشر آيات لم  
يتجاوزوها حتى يعلموا ما فيها من العلم والعمل، قالوا: فتعلمنا  
القرآن والعلم والعمل جميعاً

# The mufasssir Companions Allah be pleased with them

اشتهر بالتفسير من الصحابة عشرة: الخلفاء الأربعة، وابن مسعود، وابن عباس، وأبيّ بن كعب، وزيد بن ثابت، وأبوموسى الأشعري، وعبد الله بن الزبير. أما الخلفاء فأكثر من روى منهم عليّ ابن أبي طالب،

وقد روى معمر عن وهب بن عبد الله عن أبي الطفيل قال: شهدت علياً يخطب وهو يقول: سلوني فوالله لا تسألون عن شيء إلا أخبرتكم، وسلوني عن كتاب الله فوالله ما من آية إلا وأنا أعلم أبليّ نزلت أم بنهار؟ أم في سهل أم في جبل؟

# The mufasssir Companions Allah be pleased with them

وأما ابن مسعود فروى عنه أكثر مما روى عن عليّ، وقد  
أخرج ابن جرر وغيره عنه أنه قال: والذي لا إله غيره ما  
نزلت آية من كتاب الله إلا وأنا أعلم فيمن نزلت وأين نزلت؟  
ولو أعلم مكان أحد أعلم بكتاب الله مني تناله المطايا لأتيته.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be  
pleased with both of them

فهو ترجمان القرآن الذي دعا له النبي ﷺ اللهم فقهه في الدين  
وعلمه التأويل وقال له أيضاً اللهم آتة الحكمة وفي رواية اللهم  
علمه الحكمة. وأخرج أبو نعيم في الحلية عن ابن عمر قال:  
دعا رسول الله ﷺ لعبد الله بن عباس فقال: اللهم بارك فيه  
وانشر منه.

قال ابن عباس: قال لي رسول الله ﷺ نعم ترجمان القرآن أنت.

# Why the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them?

They are the same people who transmitted the Holy Quran to us.

They were chosen by Allah SWT to be the Companions of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

They learnt from Him, peace be upon Him.

They knew the Arabic language better than us.

They lived through the period of revelation.

They were extremely careful in explaining the Holy Quran.

# An example of the carefulness

أي أرض تقلني؟! وأي سماء تظلني؟! إذا قلت في كتاب الله ما لم أعلم، أي أرض تقلني؟! يعني: تحملني، وأي سماء تظلني؟! يعني: أنني إذا قلت ذلك فقد تجرأت على الله تعالى؛ فأكون قد أخطأت فلا تحملني الأرض لعظم ما قلته، ولا تظلني السماء لكبر ما تقولته.

Reported as the statement of Abubakar Siddique,  
رضى الله عنه

Which earth will carry me and while sky will cover me if say something about the book of Allah without knowledge?

# What if there is a difference of opinion among the Companions RA?

- Follow the opinion of the majority
- Follow the senior Companions who are established as scholars
- Follow the opinion of the خلفاء راشدين

An example:

# An example

حدثني أبو حصين عبد الله بن أحمد بن يونس قال :  
حدثنا هشيم قال : حدثنا حصين ، عن زيد بن وهب قال :  
مررت بالربذة ، فلقيت أبا ذر ، فقلت : يا أبا ذر ، ما أنزلك هذه  
البلاد؟ قال : كنت بالشَّام ، فقرأت هذه الآية : ( والذين يكتزون  
الذهب والفضة ) ، الآية ، فقال معاوية : ليست هذه الآية فينا ،  
إنما هذه الآية في أهل الكتاب! قال : فقلت : إنها لفينا وفيهم! قال  
: فارتفع في ذلك بيني وبينه القول ، فكتب إلى عثمان يشكوني ،  
فكتب إلي عثمان أن أقبل إلي ! قال : فأقبلت ، فلما  
قدمت المدينة ركبني الناس كأنهم لم يروني قبل يومئذ ، فشكوت  
ذلك إلى عثمان ، فقال لي : تنح قريبا . قلت : والله لن أدع ما كنت  
أقول!



# Tafseer by the followers

The followers were either the children or students of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

If a follower reports from a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, then it will be treated as such.

If a follower gives his own opinion, then it will be tested against the other sources of tafseer.

In the case of consensus among the followers, the opinion will be acceptable.

# Tafseer through the Arabic language

Classical Arabic poetry is often used to determine the meaning of a particular Quranic word as it was understood by the Arabs of that time.

Many of the earlier books of Tafseer quote Arabic poetry.

The Pre-Islamic poetry is still taught to familiarize the students with the classical Arabic usage.

It cannot be used to the exclusion of other sources.

# Tafseer through Arabic language

روى البيهقي في الشعب عن مالك قال: لا أوتي برجل غير عالم بلغة العرب يفسر كتاب الله إلا جعلته نكالا.

وقد أخرج ابن جرير وغيره من طرق ابن عباس قال: التفسير أربعة أوجه: وجه تعرفه العرب من كلامها، وتفسير لا يعذر أحد بجهالته، وتفسير تعرفه العلماء، وتفسير لا يعلمه إلا الله تعالى.

Imam Malik said that if a person tried to explain Allah's book without being a scholar of the Arabic language, then I will give him an exemplary punishment.

# Tafseer through intellect

Evidence for it:

وهذا هو الذي دعا به النبي ﷺ لابن عباس حيث قال: اللهم  
فقهه في الدين وعلمه التأويل،  
والذي عناه علي بقوله: إلا فهماً يؤتاه الرجل في القرآن.

**O Allah give him a deep understanding of the religion and teach him the explanation of the Quran.**

**Except the understanding that a person is given about the understanding of the Quran.**

# Caution about explaining the Holy Quran through the use of intellect only

ولا يجوز تفسير القرآن بمجرد الرأي والاجتهاد من غير أصل  
قال تعالى **ولا تقف ما ليس لك به علم وقال وأن تقولوا على**  
**الله ما لا تعلمون** وقال **لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم** أضاف البيان  
إليه. وقال ﷺ **من تكلم في القرآن برأيه فأصاب فقد أخطأ**  
**أخرجه أبو داود والترمذي والنسائي، وقال من قال في القرآن**  
**بغير علم فليتبوأ مقعده من النار** أخرجه أبو داود.

قال البيهقي في الحديث الأول: إن صح أراد الله أعلم الرأي  
الذي يغلب من غير دليل قام عليه، وأما الذي يشده برهان  
فالقول به جائز

# Tafsir by narration and tafsir by opinion

تفسير بالرواية  
تفسير بالرأى

Majority of earlier Tafasir are through transmission and give explanation of the verses of the Holy Quran through other verses, ahadith and valid opinions of the learned Companions and followers. Our traditional commentators did express their opinion but it was based upon their understanding and not without any basis.

# Unusual explanations

- Rawafid
- Batinia
- Sufi

مثل تأويل الروافض، قوله تعالى **مرج البحرين يلتقيان** إنهما عليّ وفاطمة **يخرج منهما اللؤلؤ والمرجان** يعني الحسن والحسين.

# Can anyone do tafseer?

لا يجوز لأحد أن يتعاطى تفسير شيء من القرآن وإن كان عالماً أديباً متسعاً في معرفة الأدلة والفقه والنحو والأخبار والآثار، وليس له إلا أن ينتهي إلى ما روي عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في ذلك.

قال الشافعي رضي الله عنه في مختصر البويطي: لا يحل تفسير المتشابه إلا بسنة عن رسول الله ﷺ أو خبر عن أحد من أصحابه أو إجماع العلماء،

ومنهم من قال: يجوز تفسيره لمن كان جامعاً للعلوم التي يحتاج المفسر إليها وهي خمسة عشر علماً



# 15 requirements for a mufasssir

- 1 Knowledge of the Arabic language
- 2 and 3. Grammar, الصرف و النحو
- 4 word derivation
- 5,6,7. Rhetorical sciences: معانيدو بيانو بديع
8. Knowledge of different modes of recitation
9. Knowledge of the principles of religion اصول الدين
10. Knowledge of juristic sciences
11. Knowledge of reasons for revelation and stories
12. Knowledge of abrogation
13. Jurisprudence
14. Knowledge of Hadith
15. Knowledge given specially by Allah, علم الموهبة

# Issues of modernity in the interpretation of the Holy Quran

- Where does revelation end and interpretation begin?
- What distinguishes the divine voice from the human voices that transmit or interpret it?
- What part does the humanity of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, play in the process of revelation?

# Classical view point

- The Quran has more need of the Sunnah than the Sunnah has of the Quran.
- Ash Shafai: The primary function of the Sunnah is to clarify the Quran.
- Opponents of Ash Shafai: The Quran explains everything and needs no supplement.
- The opposite view point remained dormant for centuries only to be revived in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps due to the influence of the trends in the Western world.

# Some modern trends in Tafsir

- Syed Ahmad Khan: India late nineteenth and early twentieth century:

Too heavy a reliance on hadith for the interpretation of the Quran puts at risk this eternal and universal quality. Hadith-based tafsir tends to limit the meaning of the Quran to a particular historical situation, thus obscuring its universality.

# Some modern trends in Tafsir

- Inayat Allah Mashriqi:

The correct and the only meaning of the Quran lies, and is preserved, within itself, and a perfect and detailed exegesis of its words is within its own pages. One part of the Quran explains the other; it needs neither philosophy, nor wit, nor lexicography, not even hadith.

# Some modern trends in Tafsir

- Abd Allah Chakralwi:

We should pray five times a day, not because of hadith, but because they are proven from the Holy Quran.

He considered adhan an innovation with no basis in Quran.

He modified the ritual recitations and he would allow no more than the obligatory number of ritual acts of prayer. Stand, bow and prostrate!

# Some modern trends in Tafsir

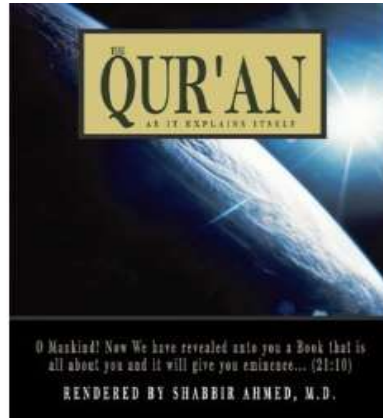
- The Egyptian Sidqi

The authority of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, is strictly limited to implementing the Quran.

Since Muslims are instructed to shorten the prayer to one raka during danger, the normal minimum requirement must be two raka only. Any additional rakas offered by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, were purely optional.

Since the QURAN does not establish the precise amount of Zakat, this is a matter of flexibility.

# Modernist approach to the Holy Quran an example



While most interpretations of the Qur'an tends to lean toward dogma or traditional idealism to explain it's verses Dr. Shabbir has totally done away with using all extrinsic sources allowing the Book to explain itself through the process of Tasreef (The Qur'an is a non-linear Book so some parts of the Book explains other parts of the Book in further detail) thus allowing the reader to focus on the 'big picture' of the Qur'anic message. Any rational being that has knowledge of the history of extrinsic sources used to explain the Qur'an by traditionalist such as hadith would easily acknowledge the dubiousness of such sources and the troubles such sources can be when it comes to diverting the seeker from the correct path of enlightenment.



# Mohammad Asad's opinion about Jinns and Angles

- In order to grasp the purport of the term jinn as used in the Qur'an, we must dissociate our minds from the meaning given to it in Arabian folklore, where it early came to denote all manner of "demons" in the most popular sense of this word. This folkloristic image has somewhat obscured the original connotation of the term and its highly significant – almost self-explanatory – verbal derivation.

# An example

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

I most humbly seek shelter with God against the promptings of all evil sources including my own ego. [Shayitaan = Satan = The straying Ego = Selfish desires = Desire that rebels against the higher controls of sound judgment = Emotions that overpower Permanent Moral Values = Intrinsic or extrinsic evil prompting = Negative peer pressure = Violent emotions = Self-glorification = Anything distant from goodness and progress = False pride = A rumor monger = Fiery temperament = Slanderer = A hinderer of good

= He who spreads corruption and disorder on earth = Anyone who impels others into violating Divine Commands = A hinderer of good = Bad companionship = One who deceives or charms people into violating Divine laws = Any being or influence that alienates humans from the Creator = One who distances itself from Divine grace. 2:14, 4:38, 4:60, 4:83, 4:119, 5:90-91, 6:43, 6:143, 7:200, 17:26-27, 22:3-4, 25:28-29, 31:21, 67:5. In Hebrew, Satan = Adversary = One who plots against another

# Another example

Jinn = Something hidden, rarely seen. So, after using Tasreef, Al-Jinn = The nomads. Jannah from the same root means a garden hidden in foliage. When the Jinns or nomads move to dwell in towns and become civilized, they are referred to as Ins

# Another example

Aadam = Adam = Man. His wife = Woman. Udma = Ability to live together as a community.

Aadam from Udma thus, indicates humankind. The word 'Eve' or Hawwa is not mentioned in the Qur'an. She is described with dignity as Mer'a-til-Aadam = Adam's Zaujah = Wife, Consort, Mate of Adam = Mrs. Adam

# Another example

(Now is related to you the creation of Adam or mankind, in allegorical terms; when God decided to create humans who would be given free will, and supremacy on earth.)

Your Lord announced His Plan to the angels, “I am about to place on earth a new creation that will have supremacy over it.” They exclaimed, “Will you place on it such creation as will cause disorder therein and shed blood! - Whereas we strive to manifest Your glory (in the Universe)!” He answered, “I know what you do not know.” [God had programmed the angels (God’s forces in nature) with specific tasks that express the Divine will. He created humans through the process of evolution and granted them the ability to make free choices. They may choose to follow Divine Guidance or deviate from it (33:72). The “angels” were not even remotely aware of any will other than God’s. The Qur’an metaphorically portrays the immense responsibility given to humans in the story of Adam. Free will may be likened to the breathing into humans from the Divine Energy

# Another example

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا  
عَجَبًا

**Shabbir: A tribe of nomands**

**Mohammad Asad: strangers who had never before been seen by the people among and to whom the Quran was being revealed.**

**They may have been Jews from distant parts of what is now the Arab world, perhaps from Syria or even Mesopotamia.**

# ما ملكت ايمانكم

- Shabbir

two, three, and four (4:127). But, if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly, then, you must not take additional wives, and may continue with what you already have  
Mohammad Asad: marry the slave girls.

# Issue of head covering for women

## A PhD thesis from Al Azhar:

Sheikh Mustapha Mohamed Rashed argued that Hijab is not an Islamic duty. He stated that Hijab refers to the cover of the head, which is not mentioned in the Holy Quran at all. “Nonetheless, a bunch of scholars insisted vehemently that the veil is both an Islamic duty and one of the most important pillars of Islam,” he added.

In doing so, the PhD candidate points out, “they deviated from the purposes of the Islamic law and “Sahih Atafsir” or the true interpretation. They rejected reasoning and relied only on literal text.”

According to Mohamed Rashed, these scholars de-contextualized the verses of the Quran and interpreted them in their very own liking, following some ancient scholars, as if what they said is sacred and is no subject to Ijtihad.

The researcher continued that the scholars, who claim that Hijab is an important pillar of Islam, departed from “Al Minhaj Assahih,” or the true path, of interpretation and reasoning, which interprets the verses according to their historical context and the causes of revelation. These scholars “interpreted the verses in their general sense, overlooking the causes of their revelation, intentionally or due to their limited intellectual capacity resulted in psychological scourge.” Worse yet, they approached hundreds of important issues in the same way.



# Need for *Ijtihad* in tafseer

- It is not forbidden to use Ijtihad or personal judgments in interpreting the Holy Quran.
- Ijtihad makes Islam flexible and elastic enough to guide Muslims in every time and age.
- Ijtihad in tafseer is not only permissible it is a must for every generation of Muslims.
- كِتَابُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ  
(29)ص

# Need for *Ijtihad* in tafseer

- Ijtihad in tafsir is not an unbridled and unconstrained studying of the words of the Holy Quran to come up with new meanings of the Quranic verses.
- For over 14 centuries Muslims scholars have pondered over the meanings of the Holy Quran
- The First Muslims were also the first recipients of the Holy Quran
- To give a meaning to the verses of the Quran that contradicts the documented understanding of our Salaf is to say that they did not understand the Quran in the first place.
- If this is the case then why did Allah SWT chose them to be the First Muslims?

# Need for *Ijtihad* in tafseer

- The meaning of the verses is fixed as determined by the sources but how that fixed meaning is reflected or applied in a certain place or time is the role of the scholar in making ijtehad.
- Hence the principles outlined by the Holy Quran and as understood by the earliest Muslims are like a ready set of data, and it is within the constraints of that fixed meaning that the scholar must seek guidance for his own particular time..
- *J. Zarabozo- How to approach and understand the Quran*

# Changing rules for changing times

فلا بد للمفتي والقاضي بل والمجتهد من معرفة أحوال الناس  
وقد قالوا ومن جهل بأهل زمانه فهو جاهل

ليس للمفتي ولا للقاضي أن يحكما على ظاهر المذهب ويتركا  
العرف

قلنا من العمل بالعرف ما لم يخالف الشريعة كالربا ونحو ذلك،  
فلا بد للمفتي والقاضي بل والمجتهد من معرفة أحوال الناس

# Conclusion

At a deeper level the controversy is above human interpreters of the Quran and their authority. If Sunna is the essential tool for understanding revelation, then experts on Sunna are likewise indispensable. But if the ability to contextualize revelation is needed, then those who know the modern world will be the most able interpreters of the Quran and knowledge of the tradition will be counted superfluous.

The deep sociological rifts between religious leadership and western-educated intelligentsia, between religious scholar and technocrat, are thus projected onto the spectrum of modern Muslim attitudes toward the Quran and its interpretation. *Daniel Brown Rethinking tradition*